

## CLAIMS

1. (currently amended): An umbrella holder, comprising:

(a) a shaft having an upper and a lower end; and

(b) means for attaching an umbrella to said shaft; and

wherein said means for attaching an umbrella to said shaft includes means for attaching said umbrella to an upper end of said shaft and wherein said means for attaching said umbrella to an upper end of said shaft includes a cup assembly attached to said upper end, said cup assembly adapted to receive a lower portion of a handle of said umbrella therein, and wherein said cup assembly includes a flexible outer sheath and a resilient insert disposed in said flexible outer sheath, said resilient insert including a center opening adapted to receive said lower portion of said handle and including means for compressing said flexible outer sheath over said resilient insert sufficient to retain said lower portion of said handle therein.

2. (previously withdrawn): The umbrella holder of claim 1, wherein said shaft includes a solid shaft.

3. (original): The umbrella holder of claim 1, wherein said shaft includes a segmented shaft.

4. (original): The umbrella holder of claim 3, wherein said segmented shaft includes at least one segment that is adapted to telescope in and out of another segment.

5. (original): The umbrella holder of claim 3, wherein said segmented shaft includes at least two segments and a collar that is adapted to retain said at least two segments in linear alignment with each other when said collar is disposed over a seam intermediate said at least two segments.

6. (original): The umbrella holder of claim 3, wherein said segmented shaft includes means for retaining at least two segments in an extended position.

7. (original): The umbrella holder of claim 6 wherein said means for retaining includes a pin in a first of said at least two segments adapted to pass through a hole in a remainder of said at least two segments sufficient to retain said at least one of said at least two segments in said extended position with respect to the other segment.

8. (previously withdrawn): The umbrella holder of claim 1, wherein said shaft includes at least two segments and including means for varying an angle intermediate said at least two segments.

9. (original): The umbrella holder of claim 1, wherein said shaft includes means for inserting a portion of said lower end into the ground.

10. (original): The umbrella holder of claim 9 wherein said means for inserting includes a lever operatively attached to said shaft, wherein said lever is adapted to be stepped on

sufficient to urge said portion of said lower end into the ground.

11. (original): The umbrella holder of claim 10 wherein said lever is adapted to pivot from a first position where a longitudinal axis of said lever is in parallel alignment with respect to a longitudinal axis of said shaft into a second position where said longitudinal axis of said lever is in perpendicular alignment with respect to said longitudinal axis of said shaft.

12. (original): The umbrella holder of claim 11 including a ring adapted to surround said shaft and wherein said lever is pivotally attached to said ring.

13. (canceled): The umbrella holder of claim 1 wherein said means for attaching an umbrella to said shaft includes means for attaching said umbrella to an upper end of said shaft.

14. (canceled): The umbrella holder of claim 13 wherein said means for attaching said umbrella to an upper end of said

shaft includes a cup assembly attached to said upper end, said cup assembly adapted to receive a lower portion of a handle of said umbrella therein.

15. (canceled): The umbrella holder of claim 14 wherein said cup assembly includes a flexible outer sheath and a resilient insert disposed in said flexible outer sheath, said resilient insert including a center opening adapted to receive said lower portion of said handle and including means for compressing said flexible outer sheath over said resilient insert sufficient to retain said lower portion of said handle therein.

16. (currently amended): The umbrella holder of claim 15 wherein said means for compressing includes a band disposed around an exterior circumference of said flexible outer sheath, said band including means for decreasing an overall length thereof sufficient to compress said flexible outer sheath.

17. (original): The umbrella holder of claim 1 including means for supporting said shaft at a location intermediate said upper end and said lower end.

18. (original): The umbrella holder of claim 17 wherein said means for supporting said shaft includes a clip that is adapted to be attached to an object and to retain said shaft thereto.

19. (previously withdrawn): The umbrella holder of claim 1 including a cover, said cover adapted to protect a portion of said upper end.

20. (currently amended): A method for holding an umbrella, comprised of the steps of:

(a) providing an umbrella holder that includes a shaft having an upper and a lower end and means for attaching said umbrella to said shaft;

(b) inserting a portion of said lower end into the ground; and

(c) providing means for supporting said shaft at a location intermediate said upper end and said lower end, and

wherein said means for attaching said umbrella to said shaft includes means for attaching said umbrella to an upper end of said shaft and wherein said means for attaching said umbrella to an upper end of said shaft includes a cup assembly attached to said upper end, said cup assembly adapted to receive a lower portion of a handle of said umbrella therein, and wherein said cup assembly includes a flexible outer sheath and a resilient insert disposed in said flexible outer sheath, said resilient insert including a center opening adapted to receive said lower portion of said handle and including means for compressing said flexible outer sheath over said resilient insert sufficient to retain said lower portion of said handle therein.